

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
February 24, 2022
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 5037 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.
Mary Ann Cole

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. Hi, my name is Mary Ann Cole and I am a registered voter from Waterbury, CT. I am here to testify regarding H.B. No. 5037 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

I am a participant of Mental Health Connecticut's Independence Center (IC) for 12 years. I am dually diagnosed with mental health and drug addiction issues and am grateful for the opportunity to share my invaluable experience with the IC.

Before I began receiving services from the IC I truly didn't know how to live a healthy life. I truly never understood how my mental illness was affecting my day to day life until I came to the IC. Upon arriving at the IC, I felt like I was in a very trusting environment and was grateful for the amazing staff. There are many workshops offered through the IC that help to recognize my behavior and how I function on my medications. The workshops at the IC provided me with the opportunity to bond with other individuals going through similar mental health issues. It was very comforting to be able to share my story with my peers in a safe and trusting setting. The IC ultimately provided me the tools to live a healthier, independent life.

I've often struggled with my mental health during the COVID pandemic. The staff from the IC reaches out to me on a daily basis to ensure that I'm doing well and am continuing to make progress. I praise the staff for what they are doing during these difficult times and would like others to know that there is help out there for mental illness. I am forever thankful for the services I have received through the IC.

Please ensure that programs and organizations such as the IC receive the proper funding to continue providing these essential services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Mary Ann Cole.